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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
10 December 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Developments in Countries on the Counter-Insurgency List

1. Laos

Laotian Army and neutralist anti-Communist forces, buoyed by recent successes, are continuing to exert pressure on Pathet Lao forces in northern and central Laos. In the Plaine des Jarres area, army troops have surrounded the town of Xieng Khouang and appear intent on its capture, while skirmishes continue between Communist and Meo forces in the surrounding area. In central Laos, the army--supported by right-wing and neutralist guerrilla teams--has captured Lak Sao and has moved to cut Route 8 between Lak Sao and the North Vietnamese border.

2. South Vietnam

The total number of Viet Cong incidents continues to decline from the high of the week following the coup but is still higher than the weekly average last year. Attacks since late November have reflected more deliberate planning and execution, however, and have been more productive to the Communists. Government weapons losses continue at a high rate, totaling 374 as against Viet Cong losses of 88 last week.

3. Iraq

A number of army units participating in the Kurdish campaign in the north have been transferred to Baghdad as a counterweight to Baathist-led troops already stationed near the city. However,

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fighting is continuing in Kurdistan, although on a reduced scale due to winter weather, and the new government appears determined to carry on the war. The Kurds do not appear to have been able to take advantage of the political confusion of the past few weeks to regain the initiative lost to the army last summer.

4. Dominican Republic

Dominican Government forces have neutralized three bands of guerrillas directed by the pro-Castro 14th of June Political Group (APCJ), but efforts to crush a fourth group of 40-80 men appear to be at least temporarily bogged down. Rumors that two additional guerrilla fronts exist have not been confirmed. Apparently the insurgents were surprised in their mountain hide-outs before they were fully prepared to begin harassment of government troops. The guerrilla movement, reportedly planned to demonstrate the present government's "instability," has so far failed to attract significant support from local peasants and dissident military elements. The rebels may also anticipate receiving direct assistance from Cuba if they can establish a firm foothold. The Dominican Government appears to have contained this particular uprising for the time being. However, all but one of the important political parties in the country oppose the government as unconstitutional, and failure to wipe out all guerrilla elements promptly could result in new and larger insurgent operations.

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6. Venezuela

Terrorist activities of the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN) have subsided since the elections on 1 December, but FALN leaders continue to threaten a new upsurge of terrorism and guerrilla activity.

FALN attacks on British-connected properties, including the British Embassy and the embassy of Trinidad and Tobago, have continued with little damage. Attacks on these targets are in retaliation for the extradition of the FALN thugs who commandeered a Venezuelan airliner on 28 November.

Military and police units continue on secondary alert status--50 percent of the personnel in the barracks at all times--and probably will be able to control urban demonstrations as they have in the past. Urban and rural areas will remain vulnerable to hit-and-run terrorist and guerrilla tactics, however.

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